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Number 2





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*Whitetails Away!*

# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



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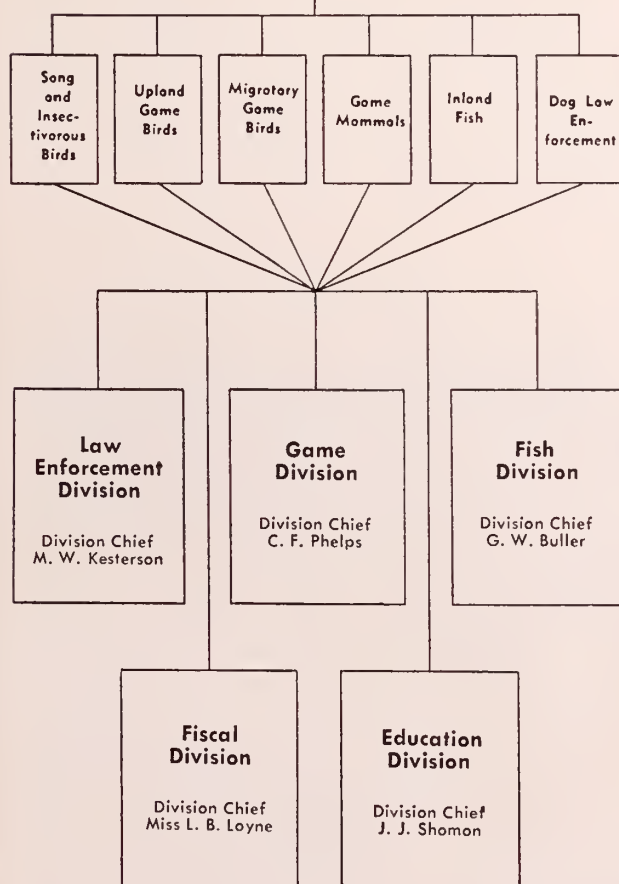
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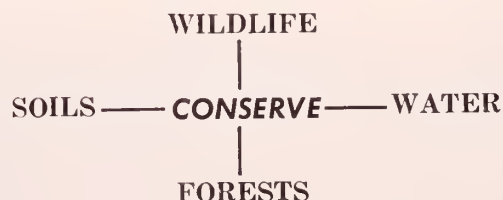
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## COVER PHOTO

A mink, wary and alert, glances nervously towards the camera. Photo by Karl H. Maslowski, from National Audubon Society.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE gratefully receives for consideration all news items, articles, photographs, sketches and other materials which deal with the use, management and study of Virginia's interrelated, renewable natural resources:



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J. J. Shomon, Editor

W. H. Mullins, Associate Editor



# Eleven Years of Wildlife Restoration



By R. M. RUTHERFORD

*Chief, Branch of Federal Aid, Fish and Wildlife Service*

**M**ORE THAN ONE MILLION acres of land have been bought; millions of acres of farm, forest and range lands have been improved to increase game crops; thousands of deer, elk, antelope and wild turkeys have been trapped and distributed to provide seed stock on vacant ranges. Those are top-flight examples of the many Pittman-Robertson program accomplishments. Virginians should be particularly proud of this record because the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act that made all this possible was sponsored by Senator A. Willis Robertson in the House of Representatives back in 1937, when he was a member of that National legislative body.

The Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries led off with a white-tailed deer importing program to get these woods dwellers back onto hereditary ranges from which they had been cleaned out in earlier times. Blessed by an abundance of food, and given all possible protection from predators and poachers, the 1,400 immigrants from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania increased at a fast clip, with

most satisfactory results to the dues paying members of the hunting fraternity.

Texas is in the No. 1 spot in trapping and distributing deer. The Lone Star State has caught and trucked almost 10,000 white-tails to new homes. An interesting sidelight on this foundation-stock procuring job is the fact that these animals have been obtained from the Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge. On that Fish and Wildlife Service layout—bought and developed to provide badly needed wintering sanctuary for ducks and geese—deer are a fast-increasing by-product on the brushy uplands that finger out into the marshlands. And the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission has not been stingy with the products of this unique deer mine. Trapped animals that are surplus to Texas' needs have been made available to states as far east as Georgia. Moreover, 25 of these Texas white-tails were trucked to Miami, Florida, early in 1948, and flown 1,100 miles to the Virgin Islands, to start a deer herd in that Island possession.

Across the country deer (white-tails, black-tails and mule) are tops in numbers among the big-game animals. They provide far more hunting than all the rest of the large game combined. Problems and actions to help them vary. In Pennsylvania, for example, most of the Pittman-Robertson cash has been invested in buying 150,000 acres of forested lands to add to the Keystone State's extensive system of game management areas. These game lands insure hunting opportunities for part of the 850,000 residents who go afield each year in pursuit of their favorite outdoor recreation. White-tails are the chief quarry; but turkeys, grouse, rabbits, and squirrels also come in for their share of attention.

Purchasing wild lands, and then standing com-

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**The Pittman-Robertson program has accomplished much towards increasing deer herds.**

U. S. F. W. S. by E. P. Haddon





placently by while nature takes her course, will not insure high-level game production. Pennsylvania found that out. At the beginning of the century that State was fresh-out of deer. To start the ball rolling about 1,200 were brought in from Michigan. Forest fires and logging had created ideal conditions for the mountains were covered with low-growing nutritious browse. The imports prospered beyond all expectations. In fact, deer numbers became so large that open seasons were declared during which only females could be bagged. It is hard to believe, but while this heyday of abundance was in full swing, the Game Commission tallied the kill over a 10-year span and found that Pennsylvania nimrods had racked up the enormous score of 700,000 white-tails.

Protected by a first-class fire prevention and suppression system the trees towered upwards. Crossing deer with giraffes is impossible, consequently most of the food supply grew beyond the reach of the deer or was shaded out. To hold the line, the Game Commission is now conducting logging operations to open up the forest lands it owns. The extent to which this can be done without too much loss through the sale of small diametered products will determine the size of future operations and the extent of benefits to the white-tails.

In the west, lack of winter range is the bottleneck for many deer herds. Solving the problem calls for one of two actions; either the numbers must be reduced or needed winter-range acquired. California's Tehama deer winter range is typical of the latter. Located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, at the north end of the Sacramento Valley, this is the end of the line for thousands of black-tails that hot-foot down from the snowy mountains every winter. Long-range plans call for purchasing 180,000 acres of low-quality livestock range. Of this, 42,000 acres have been bought to date. State management includes leasing of grazing privileges to cattle operators, but bands of sheep that

formerly ranged the lands with deer and cattle are excluded. Those potential lamb chops are keen competitors of deer—both pass up grass to browse on trees and shrubs.

But deer problems can't always be solved by acquiring lands or releasing seed stock. Wisconsin is an eloquent example of that. As is common in the colder latitudes, Badger State deer crowd into wooded swamps when the ample summer ranges are blanketed by deep and drifting snow. Too many white-tails squeezed into too small an area spell starvation—mostly of fawns. I have snowshoed into such overbrowsed yards and seen the carcasses of many of the victims. It is a shameful waste of what was nourishing meat, but equally bad is the over-utilization of food species year-after-year, to the point where many of them are killed out. That means that far fewer deer can be sustained on the same lands in the future.

This sad state of affairs has not been the fault of the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Far from it. That Department invested quite a wad of its Pittman-Robertson cash to finance the work of skilled technicians who gathered the population and forage utilization facts. The State game authorities have been clamoring for action, but sentimentalists who class doe deer as sacred cows blocked sound management action. Shooting bucks will never answer the problem. Deer are highly polygamous, and even when the country is hunted hard, enough males escape the gunners to breed the does and keep the population spiraling upwards.

Artificial feeding is no good. No game department could afford it on the lavish scale necessary, and even though they could the deer would still starve to death. In the early days of the Pittman-Robertson program, Colorado was spending about \$50,000 a year buying and distributing food to hungry deer. Investigations on the feeding grounds turned up startling evidence—the handout beneficiaries were dying with their bellies full of top-grade cattle feed. That brought

**Beaver ponds may raise water tables—provide water for livestock and wildlife.**

U. S. Forest Service



**The little hydraulic engineers have been returned to suitable sites in 19 states.**

Flournoy, V. S. C. C.





killing with kindness to a fast stop. Since then Colorado has been appraising the carrying capacity of its deer ranges, then using that sensible ranching practice to figure what the harvest should be. The deer herds (there is little migration between watersheds) lend themselves very nicely to individual treatment. Hunting pressure is expanded or contracted depending upon deer numbers as compared to their winter food supply. In some situations, Colorado has permitted the taking of two of either sex to insure a fast reduction in overpopulated places. When the Pittman-Robertson field technicians get the facts, the game authorities don't ponder long before applying the proper remedy.

No account of woodland wildlife would be complete if the beaver were left out. Fortunes were made from the sale of their pelts in the early days. This whipped up much of the enthusiasm to spur civilization toward the Pacific. Braving the scalp-lifting antics of hostile Indians, hard-bitten trappers scoured the wilderness waterways to harvest the crop. Beaverless streams were left behind as sorry evidence of the skill of these roving steel trap experts.

To repopulate skinned-out waterways, 19 states (including Virginia) have trapped and returned over 10,000 of these furry hydraulic engineers to sites where they can impound water and produce an annual fur crop. In the Rockies where most of this restoration work has been done, seed stock is usually obtained by live-trapping animals that have paddled down into the lowlands. In such places they are about as welcome as a belligerent polecat at a jam-packed political rally. They have no inhibitions about damming irrigation canals, cutting down fruit and shade trees, or helping the farmer harvest his corn crop. But back in the mountains where they belong, their dam building and tree gnawing tactics are welcomed.

Raised ground water levels on the mountain meadows bordering beaver impoundments improve cattle grazing changes. The ponds provide a year-

round water supply for livestock and wildlife, and it is rare indeed when one of these ponds does not produce at least one brood of ducks each year. Downstream residents of creeks on which these king-sized rodents have been planted report that the streams now flow the entire year, as compared to scattered flows prior to reintroduction of these furry tree droppers. And last but not least, the pelts (which provide what it takes for those sharp-looking coats that keep milady warm in bitter weather) always bring a high price in the fur trade.

Elk numbers are on the climb in the West. With that have come the usual headaches for State game administrators. These big cousins of the deer have the bad habit of invading ranches, grazing the winter range of cattle, and free-lunching at the hay stacks. To illustrate, Montana, by good management boosted its Sun River herd to 3,000 animals. At that level 25 percent or 750 elk can be bagged each year. From late spring to winter the herd fans out over the rugged Rockies on National Forest lands at the Continental Divide. But ranch depredations in the lower country and the loud cries for relief from bedeviled cattlemen put the Montana Game Commission on the spot. The herd had to be scaled down or winter range bought for them. The Commission decided to maintain the supply. Fine progress is being made on acquiring 60,000 acres of key ranchlands, ownership of which will insure herd perpetuation. Like action on problem concentrations has been taken in Washington, Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado.

And antelope are staging a spectacular comeback with the aid of Pittman-Robertson funds. Once numbered in the millions, and ranging the plains from Iowa to California and from Canada to Mexico, the pronghorns were practically whittled out of existence. Overshooting, predation and changed land uses were responsible. But with better law enforcement and tighter controls over their principal enemy the coyote,

**Elk herds are increasing in the West. This is part of Montana's Sun River elk herd on the winter range acquired for them with the help of P-R funds.**

R. F. Cooney, Montana Fish and Game Commission







C. H. Bennett, U. S. F. W. S.

**Antelope, once practically extinct, are now staging a spectacular comeback.**

the way was opened to getting them back onto vacant but suitable ranges. The rub was in figuring out a practical way for catching the fleetest North American quadruped. New Mexico solved that. A winged trap was designed and cowboys used to haze these plains speedsters into a cord-mesh lined enclosure where they couldn't injure themselves by lunging against the sides. Then Texas took the New Mexico idea, but cut out the hard riding cowpokes and substituted an airplane. Montana added some improvements in simplifying trap construction. In the past nine years, those States plus Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming have caught and released almost 9,000 antelope. Some of the earlier plantings have already built up to the point where they are supplying hunting.

Rocky Mountain sheep and goats have been given their due share of attention. Field studies in their lofty and precipitous homes have been made to prescribe management measures to increase the numbers of these highly prized game animals. Montana has trapped and moved 55 goats to isolated mountain ranges east of the backbone of the Rockies. This was brand-new range but conditions are right and the transplants are doing fine. Colorado, which never had any of these chin-whiskered inhabitants of the crags, traded 16 big-horn sheep to Montana for an equal number of goats. In addition, Colorado has trapped 55 big-horns out of its largest band and released them in places where their kind had been shot out in earlier times.

Chronicling Pittman-Robertson doings in the high mountains, woodlands and plains would be incomplete without including our original Thanksgiving bird—the wild turkey. Colorado has done a spectacular job on its type, the Merriam turkey (a bigger creature than the eastern bird, somewhat different in coloration, but with the same excellent table qualities). The first step in this operation was to locate the shattered flocks remaining. Then a ranch was bought at a place where



U. S. Forest Service

**Virginia is one of the leading eastern states in the wild turkey restoration program.**

the largest concentrations of the State's gobblers and hens funneled down out of the mountains each winter. Grains were planted to provide plenty to eat. Birds were trapped and released on formerly occupied ranges. With 10 years of this work behind them the Colorado Game Commission in 1949 proudly announced the first open season on turkeys in half a century.

All of the Eastern States from Pennsylvania south are working to increase their wild turkeys. Virginia is one of the leaders in this. Carving out and maintaining clearings in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is providing an essential of habitat balance. Lacking a supply of wild birds for trapping and distribution, the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries has done the next best thing—game farm hens are placed in enclosures in the wild where they are mated with wild gobblers. The progeny are then released in their ancestral homes. Pennsylvania has had good success with the same restoration system. In fact, the occupied range has been doubled and the wild turkey population trebled, in that State. Texas leads the parade in this kind of work, having trapped and transplanted almost 3,000 birds of the Rio Grande type. And at the far end of the range of this most prized hunting trophy, Arizona has had rare success in restoring its kind (the Merriam or mountain turkey) in the mountains where eagle-eyed pioneers and prospectors carved altogether too liberally from the early abundance.

How about those vile turkey predators? Missouri insists that the worst of the lot is the two-legged character with a gun. Arizona found it necessary to control coyotes and bobcats to give new plantings the best possible chance to get started. Alabama made a careful study and came up with this conclusion: if cotton rats, rabbits, and other rodents are up to their normal numbers, leave the foxes and bobcats alone.

(Continued on page 26)



# Bobwhites on the Rise

By VERNE E. DAVISON\*

**T**HE BOBWHITE range encompasses approximately 855 million acres of land in 32 states. Within the same area live 115 million people, which is 82 percent of the population of the United States.

Each citizen of hunting age and inclination may have asked himself at some time, "What is my rightful heritage in bobwhites? How many of the little birds is my fair share? How generously has the state provided me with hunting of the eastern quail?"

Many have never asked themselves those questions. How well have we provided that "right of every man to the pursuit of hunting" which we so glibly defend? Will a realistic look be disappointing?

An inquiry of the 32 states as to their bobwhite populations in 1947 brought many replies of "no information" as to numbers, but they "wish we knew." A few gave estimates from surveys and studies conducted in recent years by their game technicians. From their estimates and my own calculations, I put the total number of bobwhites at 60 million birds in the

fall of 1948; or 30 million (one-half) in the spring of 1949. (For Virginia the general estimate of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries of the fall population was roughly 3,000,000 bobwhites. Remember, the Spring numbers would be about half as many).

Sixty million birds is only one bird for every 14 acres of land in the quail range. It averages out to be one covey per farm, since the average farm is 200 acres in size.

Sixty million birds would provide no more than 6 or 7 birds a year for each farm owner to harvest if he allowed none of his friends to hunt. Sixty million birds would allow less than 4 birds annually for each licensed hunter (if the landowner refrained from hunting). The harvest will not exceed half the fall population (or 30 million out of 60). Obviously 60 million is not enough quail for the quail hunters. Thirty million is not enough for the American hunters' bags.

An area of 855 million acres is a vast amount of land which could produce many million more quail than it does: certainly double that number, and probably more. About two-thirds of this land is privately

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**Food and cover are the Bobwhite's greatest needs. He must have them 365 days a year. This field after harvest time provides little cover and a meager amount of food.**





owned farms, ranches and woodland holdings, on which nearly the entire quail population is produced and hunted. The remaining land is in cities, roads and public lands which produce only a minor portion of the quail. Quail abundance has not been achieved by the states and their licensed hunters who once claimed the responsibility. It must be accomplished, if ever, by the four and a half million (4,500,000) landowners upon whose properties the birds spend their lives.

Any way we say it, the bobwhite population is far from enough. On many farms and in numerous localities the birds have become fewer, even to the vanishing point. The landowner who claims to have more birds than ever before is a very rare person, indeed . . .

If you want quail in abundance, you will reckon with "wildlife land," interspersed wherever you can afford it in fields, woods, and pastures. Wildlife land is land which is managed and reserved for the sole purposes of the game you intend to produce. For bobwhites the areas need not be large.

Land management for quail is not new. Owners of a few plantations and hunting preserves have expended much effort with varying degrees of success since the close of the 19th century. One variant never attained was to be able to grow enough birds.

The chief problems of management are: (1) which foods, (2) what cover, and (3) where shall each be located on a man's land? Remember, bobwhites must

find the food and shelter they need within each farm, or you do not have successful management.

Quail management, pursued only as a by-product of cropland, woodland, and pasture management, is not as effective as we had all hoped through recent years. Whether it's Florida, Texas, Virginia or New York you will find much of the land is quail-less for lack of food or cover or both. No laws, no restocking, no sportsmanship can alleviate these faults of habitat. The only solution is to add the essential elements which are lacking. It is as simple as that. And it is not expensive.

The economic need to wrest some financial return from every foot of land is not as formidable a barrier against inclusion of wildlife land in farm patterns, as many despairing wildlifers have lamented. Where measures for the restoration of bobwhites are properly fitted to the land, bobwhites will thrive in greater numbers than heretofore.

I have made the point emphatically that winter quail food is seldom sufficient in nature or man's recent management of land. Bicolor lespedeza is astonishingly successful on lands where everyone once believed the food supply was abundant, and also on "poor lands" where quail abundance seemed impossible. The discovery and development of bicolor permitted simplification of management. It gave us new concepts—new principles—in bobwhite management.

(Continued on page 22)

**In contrast to the temporary crop on the left, this permanent field border of bicolor and sericea offers to quail and other wildlife a sustained supply of food and cover.**





# Trail Blazers



By D. A. CANNADAY

**W**ITH THE NEAR APPROACH of the bicentennial celebration of the settlement of southwest Virginia we are reminded of the important role that hunters of two hundred years ago played in opening up the western half of the state and beyond. Our ancestors could have spun some tall tales about those early settlers whose experiences hold a strange fascination for present day sportsmen.

William Byrd of Westover, exploring his lands east of present Danville as early as 1730, killed and dined on buffalo. And Peter Salley of Balcony Falls, with his Scotch-Irish neighbors of the Valley on their memorable exploration of 1742, found good buffalo hunting in the New River areas around present Blacksburg and Radford. They killed five of the great beasts on their first hunt and navigated New River and the Ohio with a boat made of their hides.

The present Roanoke area, then known as the Great Lick, was also known for its buffalo hunting.

**Old-time hunters were real woodsmen and carried very little equipment.**

J. S. Ligon, U. S. F. W. S.



Dr. Thomas Walker of Albemarle remarked in his journal of 1750: "We went to the Great Lick on a branch of the Staunton (Roanoke) and bought corn of Michael Campbell for our horses. This Lick has been one of the best places for game in these parts, and would have been of much greater advantage to the Inhabitants than it has been if the Hunters had not killed the Buffaloes for diversion, and the Elks and Deer for their skins." On this same exploration Dr. Walker and his party stopped with the Dunkards at their settlement above present Radford, March 16 to 20, sharing with them their plenty of turkeys and venison. And pressing on westward, along the Holston and across the Clinch and Powell through Cumberland Gap, which they named, the party brought down many a bear and deer. Returning by way of Bluestone and the Greenbrier, back across the Valley to Albemarle, Walker summed up the game killed between his departure in early March and return in mid-July: "We killed in the journey 13 Buffaloes, 8 Elks, 53 Bears, 20 Deer, 4 wild Geese, about 150 Turkeys, besides small

**The early trail blazers often had to run the gauntlet of Indian attacks.**

Bureau of Indian Affairs





game. We might have killed three times as much meat, if we had wanted it."

Game being plentiful on the western waters, by the 1760's hunting parties began to organize at Fort Chiswell, in present Wythe County, for long hunts into Kentucky and the Tazewell country, going out one year and staying till the next, returning to the settlements laden with valuable furs for the eastern buyers and the English market. This profitable practice was largely responsible for bringing to the English government in Williamsburg realization of the value of the fine areas of land in southwest Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Elisha Walden, Bill and Jack Blevins, Walter Newman, Charles Cox, and others from the Blue Ridge area of present Henry County and vicinity in 1761 took a hunt of eighteen months on the streams and valleys between the Long Island of the Holston (present Kingsport) and Cumberland Gap; and by 1763, they, with James Aldridge and others, were pressing on through the Gap into the Rockcastle country of Kentucky.

**Bear hunting 200 years ago required good dogs and horses and lots of stamina.**

U. S. Forest Service



In June, 1769, a party from the New River area and as far east as Rockbridge County set out from Fort Chiswell. They included Kasper Mansker, Uriah Stone, Richard Skaggs, and Abraham and Isaac Bledsoe. Through Powell Valley and the Gap into Kentucky and down the Cumberland, they established their central camp in what is now Sumner County, Tennessee, discovered Bledsoe's Lick and Mansker's Lick, afterwards notable in the settlement of Nashville.

Also in 1769, Daniel Boone came up from his home on the Yadkin for his first long hunt into the Kentucky country. Heading northward from the Hunters Trace in the Rockcastle country, Boone and Finley encountered the beautiful Kentucky levels. Boone describes it from his camp on Station Creek: "We found everywhere abundance of wild beasts of all sorts, through this vast forest. The buffaloes were more frequent than I had seen cattle in the settlements, browsing on the leaves of the cane, or cropping the herbage on those extensive plains, fearless, because ignorant of the violence of man. Sometimes we saw hundreds in a drove, and the numbers about the salt springs were amazing." Before they could return home Boone and Finley's rich store of furs was plundered by the Indians and their companion John Stuart slain. The same tragic fate befell Boone's son, James, and Captain William Russel's son Henry, near Cumberland Gap a year or so later.

That the Indians were great rivals among themselves for the rich hunting grounds of the southwest appears from experiences of long hunters of the Tazewell country. The Cherokees from Tennessee, following up the Clinch, found their best hunting at its head, in the present Tazewell; the Shawnees, from the Ohio, coming southward up the Big Sandy, reached the same area. A conflict between the two was witnessed by long hunters Butler and Carr, 1768. Says Bickley in his history of Tazewell: "The hunters usually went to the mountains in companies of eight or ten, having pack-horses, with which they brought home their peltry. The equipment for a trip of this kind consisted of a rifle, powder, ball, a hatchet or tomahawk, knife, and blanket. They also carried salt, and provisions enough to last them two days or beyond the settlement, from which time the forest yielded a plentiful supply.

"The first of these hunting companies visited the Tazewell part of the Clinch Valley in 1767; of their acts nothing is known. In the following year another company came out, in which were two men, named Butler and Carr. They were also in the first company. When his second company was ready to start back Butler and Carr concluded to stay and wait the arrival of a company expected out that fall. They built a small cabin at a place now known as the Crab Orchard, about three miles west of the present seat of justice. During the spring they opened a small field and planted some corn, which they received from a band





U. S. Forest Service

**Good buffalo hunting was found in the New River and Roanoke areas. Elk, bear, deer, geese, turkey, and numerous kinds of small game were also found in abundance.**

of Cherokees. In the fall the expected company of hunters arrived, and were joined by Butler and Carr, who had by this time acquired a correct knowledge of the geographical features of the country. They hunted till spring, leaving Butler and Carr to spend another summer in the mountains. Having received from the last company a supply of ammunition they became settled in their resolution to make the wild backwoods their home, and accordingly began to improve around their camp, and open lands, on which to raise bread.

"1768—Early in the summer about two hundred Cherokee warriors camped near them, to spend the summer and kill elk which frequented a lick near, and on the present plantation of Mr. Thomas Witten. These, however, were soon disturbed by the appearance of several hundred Shawnees, men and women. The Shawnees and Cherokees had long been deadly enemies, and it was not to be supposed that they could camp near each other, and hunt at the same lick without a battle. The Shawnees as a people are overbearing; and they were not long in exhibiting this feature of their character. The Shawnee chief sent a peremptory order to the Cherokees to evacuate their position and seek a new hunting ground. This was early in the day. The messenger was sent back to defy the Shawnees, who soon began to prepare for battle.

"The Cherokees retired to the top of Rich mountain and threw up a breastwork, which was finished before night. It consisted of a simple embankment about three or four feet high, running east and west along the top of the mountain about eighty yards, and then turning off at right angles to the north, or down

the mountain side. The Shawnees began the ascent of the mountain before night of the first day, but finding their enemies so strongly fortified withdrew and posted themselves in a position to commence the attack early the following morning.

"Long before day the fiendish yells of the warriors might be heard echoing over the rugged cliffs and deep valleys of the surrounding country. Day came, and for the space of half an hour a death-like stillness reigned on the mountain top and side. With the first rays of the rising sun a shout ascended the skies as if all the wild animals in the woods had broken forth in their most terrifying notes. The sharp crack of rifles and ringing of tomahawks against each other; the screams of women and children and the groans of the dying now filled the air for miles around. Both parties were well armed and the contest nearly equal, the Shawnees having the most men while the Cherokees had the advantage of their breastwork. Through the long day, the battle raged with unabated vigor, and when night closed in both parties built fires and camped on the ground. During the night, the Cherokees sent to Butler and Carr for powder and lead, which they furnished. When the sun rose the following morning the battle was renewed with the same spirit in which it had been fought the previous day. In a few hours, however, the Shawnees were compelled to retire. The loss on both sides was great, considering the numbers engaged. A large pit was opened and a common grave received those who had fallen in this last battle fought between red men in this section.

(Continued on page 23)



# CONSERVATIONGRAM

Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

IN A RECENT MEMORANDUM to all organizations and individuals interested in the constructive development of Virginia's Wildlife Resources, I. T. Quinn, Executive Director of the Game Commission, outlined the following points concerning possible legislation in the current session of the General Assembly:

1. A proposed reorganization which seeks to combine the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Conservation and Development Board, the Water Control Board, and the Commission of Fisheries—all to be brought under the administration of one Board.

As the Game Commission is at present constituted, it is headed up by a Commission, all members of which are sportsmen in the truest sense of the word and who are vitally interested in wildlife protection and development. This interest is not divided with matters not related to many of the problems that would necessarily confront a Board such as is proposed.

2. Reduction in license fees. This proposal will be made on the theory that the Game Commission has not made adequate use of the increased revenue accruing from the increase in fees by the 1948 General Assembly.

This Act did not go into effect until July 10, 1948, the beginning of the biennium budget for 1948-50. There was no possible way for anyone to estimate what increase, if any, there would be in revenue over the year previous, until January, 1949. Notwithstanding this fact, we anticipated there would be some increase, and, in consequence, the Commission made an approximate expansion of its program of twenty-five per cent. In 1950 all activities will be further expanded and the work intensified.

3. A complete reorganization of the Commission itself, setting up a three-man board patterned after the ABC Board.

This means that there would be three full-time heads administering the game, inland fish and dog laws at an additional cost of administration of more than \$23,000. There is a wide difference between administering the liquor laws and looking after the morals of the public, and in the management of the State's wildlife resources.

4. Abolish the Game Protective Fund and cover all moneys therefrom into the General Fund. This is the easiest way for other State Agencies to get their hands on some of the sportsmen's money. If that should result, under the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act of September 2, 1937, known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, Virginia would be denied its prorata share of P-R funds, which last year amounted to \$199,629.71.

5. A proposal to give the Commission full authority to fix seasons and bag limits and to manage the wildlife resources of the State. Before fixing seasons and bag limits, Commission is required to make survey of wildlife species. All laws or parts of laws in conflict are repealed.

It is believed that this proposal is along the right lines and therefore constructive.

Won't you discuss these problems with your State Senator and Member of House of Delegates?

THE DINGELL BILL was the first bill introduced in the 81st Congress. This bill, which earmarked the war excise tax on fishing equipment to provide Federal aid for State fishing restoration projects, was introduced in the 80th Congress and passed both Houses. However, the President vetoed the bill.

The only exceptions are that the new bill makes the effective date of the Act July 1, 1950, instead of 1947 as in the bill which was vetoed.

With this retroactive feature removed proponents of the bill feel that the major objection of the President will have been removed and that he will give it his approval.





Song birds flock to areas where snow is removed and food scattered about.



Youth organizations can develop projects for feeding wildlife during winter.

## Help Wildlife T

Mother Nature, if left undisturbed, would take care of her birds and animals. However, since civilization has taken over the land, food, it means that wildlife is forced to go to a great amount of land.

Even with good management of the land, winter ice and snow may cover virtually all the ground as the wild creatures search out every icy patch.

At times like this the least man can do is to help. Shown here are photographs taken during the winter.

(Photos by Mosb and)



During emergencies the Game Commission distributes feed to landowners and clubs.



Old stumps or overhanging brush which protect ground from snow make good feeding areas.



Waterfowl in particular suffer when a heavy ice cover keeps them scampering about on the ice, eager for food.





Plantings such as this *Lespedeza cyrtobotrya* provide food even in deep snow.

## ough The Winter

usually provide abundantly for the wild birds taken over areas which once produced natural for its livelihood from a continually shrinking

areas left for wildlife, fate sometimes steps in. sources of food. It's a grim fight for life then, a contested morsel.

to provide as much artificial food as possible. critical periods for wildlife.

(National Park Service)



When the freeze comes. These pintails and mallards are feeding on the corn being thrown to them.



Feeding shelters similar to this but with four sides open should be built in the early fall.



A feeding mission is started. It's important to locate the range of wildlife.



Observation of tracks, roosts, and other "signs" locates wildlife. Feed can be put nearby.





American Museum of Natural History

**The red squirrel is noisy but fascinating.  
He's the watchman of the woods.**

**H**AVE YOU EVER moved silently down a forest trail, eyes sweeping back and forth, every nerve intent in your search for a lordly turkey or a majestic buck, only to have the woods above your head explode with a noise that sounds for all the world like someone rattling a handful of dried peas in a beer can? Chances are that if you have, you've joined the ranks of thousands of other sportsmen who have turned and heartily cursed out the saucy fellow in the red coat, who has just informed the whole forest of your presence in it and of his resentment of your trespass.

Whether this is your first meeting with *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* as the red squirrel is known in scientific company, or whether the mountain boomer is an old acquaintance, that ear rattling voice breaking the stillness of the conifer forest can prove unnerving to the steadiest of men.

The red squirrel is the watchman of the woods. He is arrogant, mischievous, noisy, quarrelsome, an altogether bad neighbor, and yet he is fascinating. These very traits, that in a fellow human would be intolerable, when embodied in a tiny creature not ten inches long become amusing, and take on a peculiar charm of their own.

Little escapes his bright shoe-button eye, and he is always ready to carry the latest bit of gossip to the whole world. His only rival for these dubious honors

# The Mountain "Boomer"

By R. T. SPEERS\*



is the raucous blue jay, but measured by sheer noise and duration, the boomer wins hands down. Once something out of the ordinary comes to his attention, he forgoes everything else and devotes his entire time to it. He is reluctant to give up the chastisement of his victim once he has begun and usually will wring every last drop of excitement out of his find before he finally tires of his game and goes off in search of something better to do.

The writer can recall an instance in New Hampshire in 1941 when he was unfortunate enough to be "discovered" by a red squirrel while deer hunting. For a full quarter of a mile through the woods he was pursued by a chattering, scolding, screeching and thoroughly indignant ball of red fur, who put a very effective end both to my deer hunting for the moment and to what was left of my patience and temper.

At times like this the red squirrel seems like the biggest nuisance in the woods, and yet I can also remember another instance, this time in the snow covered spruce forest of Maine, when I sat in complete fascination for at least a half hour and watched a sleek coated little gourmet daintily extract the seeds from a tremendous heap of cones that he had piled around the base of an old stump. The top of the stump had been swept clean of snow and upon this dining table he carefully placed each seed. When a little mound of seeds had been assembled, he gave up his operations upon the cones and with much whisker and nose wiggling, proceeded to gobble down the accumulated food in the shortest possible time. This

\* This article introduces Ronald T. Speers, the new educational assistant heading up the Special Services Section.



In Virginia, the red squirrel is commonly known only in mountain areas such as this. Although his diet may vary, it usually consists of the seeds of conifers.



U. S. Forest Service

was done with such evident enjoyment and self satisfaction that it was truly comical to behold.

During both the cone opening and the seed eating operations, two sharp beady eyes constantly surveyed the stranger in the red and plaid hunting jacket who sat ten feet away on a fallen spruce log and puffed placidly on his pipe. Even when I rose and kicked the drifted snow from my snowshoes, he was not alarmed but sat calmly on the old stump and continued with his meal as if he *knew* that I was on a timber survey and meant him no harm.

In Virginia, the red squirrel is commonly known only in the mountain areas. He is relatively scarce in the Piedmont and Tidewater. The reason for this is comparatively simple. Although he is fairly omnivorous in his choice of food and has been accused of eating everything from bird eggs to young birds themselves, the truth is that the major portion of his diet consists of the seeds of conifers,—spruce, fir, and pine. Because of this, he is a creature of the mountain forests, and the hardwood growth of the plains and coast holds little appeal for him.

He goes by a multitude of colloquial names, but almost all of them are derived from his noisy voice. Mountain boomer is his common name in the hazy reaches of the Blue Ridge, and his whirring, chattering call is as familiar to the people of the mountains as the chukking bark of his big cousin the grey squirrel is to the dwellers of the flatter sections of the state. Unlike the grey who is a fairly gregarious fellow with a taste for family living, the boomer is a solitary individual, usually living alone with the exception of the mating season, and apparently liking it. He is the proprietor of an area of about five to seven hundred feet in diameter and within this circle he considers himself king. He will fight vigorously to defend this

territory from any usurper, and the larger grey and fox squirrels are no match for him. He will attack them ferociously and drive them far beyond the limits of his territory.

His housekeeping habits are well in keeping with the “bachelor” existence. “Home” is usually a hole in a hollow tree, but occasionally leaf nests are built; whichever is used, cleanliness is definitely not considered a virtue. All kinds of debris and parasites accumulate until they prove too much to cope with. When this point is reached he simply abandons the old place and moves his living quarters to another location in his area.

His enemies are numerous and he is extremely unlikely to die of old age. To little boys with slingshots and men with rifles he is a fast moving, and therefore interesting target. Foxes and dogs make life miserable for him on the ground. House cats add to his troubles by following him right into the trees and undoubtedly many young and inexperienced squirrels fall victim to feline predators every year.

In the forests, weasel, mink, lynx, and bobcat must be watched for. From the skies above winged doom in the form of swift swooping hawks and owls may talon an unsuspecting squirrel from a limb. The pine marten is the very essence of death itself to the red squirrel for he can run faster, jump further, and go anywhere the squirrel can. Fortunately for the boomer, the marten has been trapped to a point of rareness now, and life for the squirrel is just that much easier.

From the number and variety of his predators, it would seem that the red squirrel spends the major portion of his time trying to avoid becoming the main course at someone else’s banquet, but actually he

(Continued on page 26)



# The Business Value of Wildlife

**Don't discount the dollar and cents value  
of our wildlife—there's more than  
meets the eye.**

By JOHN H. GWATHMEY

(Game Commission photos by Crowford)

**T**HE AVERAGE CITIZEN has no conception of the impact of hunting and fishing upon the economy of Virginia. Unfortunately, there are no up-to-the-minute figures on the expenditures of hunters and anglers in pursuit of their sport, but it can be conservatively estimated that they will spend at least \$100,000,000 in Virginia this year.

A comprehensive survey made by the Ohio Division of Conservation and Natural Resources for the year 1947 is revealing. The reader may draw his own conclusions as to the approximate expenditures in Virginia. It should be remembered, however, that Ohio has little waterfowl gunning, one of Virginia's most expensive pastimes, and that Ohio has no salt-water fishing, a sport on which a very large percentage of the Virginia sportsman's money is spent. Four-fifths of the hunting in Ohio is for rabbits, a relatively inexpensive sport.

Almost 5,000 Ohio license-holders answered a questionnaire regarding their individual hunting expenses. Of these hunters, 56.4 percent also fished and reported fishing expense. A store-to-store check of the volume of business transacted as a result of wildlife resources was conducted. On a basis of the composite

**American anglers spent \$1,350,000,000 last year  
in their pursuit of the finny tribe.**

Courtesy Ted Reoms Sport Center



of these findings, it was calculated that the hunters and anglers in 1947 spent \$71,576,850 in Ohio in pursuit of their sports.

In the war year 1944, when gasoline was rationed, shells were scarce, and a high percentage of potential hunters and anglers were busy in winning the war, a national survey printed in the *Congressional Record* put the expenditures in Virginia at \$72,000,000. Back in 1933, a careful local survey was made in Alabama and it was found that in that state in that year the sportsmen spent \$53,000,000. The more recent Ohio report perhaps gives the most nearly accurate basis for an approximation of what is being spent. It is a huge amount in Ohio, and it is likewise a huge amount in Virginia.

The Ohio data indicated that there were in that state no fewer than 9,158 establishments profiting directly, and these establishments employed a minimum of 21,170 persons. No attempt was made to estimate the number of persons profiting from the sale of such things as gasoline, meals, lodging, refreshments, hunting privileges, guide service and the like.

It was conclusively shown in this survey that the wildlife resources were of even greater importance to

**Hunters were no pikers in 1948. They added  
\$750,000,000 to the Nation's economic larder.**

Courtesy Richmond Gun Shop



VIRGINIA WILDLIFE





One of the top expenditures of sportsmen in all states, including Virginia, is for gas and oil.



Numerous vocations hinge on hunting and fishing. One of these is that of taxidermy.

citizens other than those who engaged in hunting and fishing. In addition to the money put in circulation, it was estimated that the hunters killed nearly 13 million pounds of dressed meat which, if valued at only 50 cents a pound, amounted to \$6,500,000, and the impounded waters—streams not included—produced 1,500,000 pounds of fish valued at \$500,000. This excellent food was consumed by many besides those who hunted and fished.

A breakdown of the distribution of Ohio's hunting and fishing dollars for 1947 was as follows:

Transportation (gas and oil)	\$ 9,922,100
Fishing tackle	9,772,750
Guns	7,399,300
Boats (purchase)	7,385,750
Clothing	5,489,550
Meals	5,222,600
Lodging	3,535,500
Paid privileges	3,452,000
Boats (rental)	3,448,750
Refreshments	3,301,350
Ammunition	3,007,300
Bait	2,712,500
Dogs (board & training)	2,122,800
Dogs (purchase)	1,964,200
Licenses	1,505,200
Tackle repair	635,500
Club dues	388,600
Decoys	311,100
Total	\$71,576,850

of Virginia's sportsmen. Ohio has no upland game hunting season which runs more than 15 days except the rabbit season, which runs 41 days. Virginia hunters can take some species of legal game for 4 months and 20 days, and anglers can fish the year round.

With quail on the songbird list in Ohio—this was changed this year—and no open season on turkeys, deer, bears or any other type of big game, it may be seen that the character of the hunting in Ohio is quite different from the hunting in Virginia. A breakdown of the hunting pressure absorbed by species of Ohio wildlife is shown in the survey as follows:

	PERCENT
Rabbit	81.0
Pheasant	69.9
Fox squirrel	48.1
Gray squirrel	31.1
Red fox	12.4
Raccoon	11.5
Ducks	9.1
Woodchucks	9.1
Muskrat	9.0
Ruffed grouse	8.9
Opossum	8.3
Geese	4.7
Gray fox	4.6
Mink	4.4
Woodcock	3.6
Weasel	2.5
Gallinule	1.4
Rail	1.4
Coot	1.3
Badger	.5

Because of the popularity of salt-water fishing in Virginia, it is a certainty that much more is spent on boats in Virginia than in Ohio, and that dues in the various types of hunting and fishing clubs constitute one of the very expensive items in the annual budgets

Because of the mild climate and the long, leisurely hunting and fishing season in Virginia, there are other

(Continued on page 26)



# An Old Virginia Rabbit Hunt

By ROBERT C. LYNE

**R**ABBIT HUNTERS are a rare breed. Among the sporting brethren the fox has his disciples; to some who shoot, "birds" are the only game; there is even a strange group of men who prowl the swamps and woodlands in the weird hours of the night in search of 'coons and call it sport; but of all the sons of Nimrod, none are more numerous or more rabid than the devotees of the cottontail, that elusive little bit of scared lightning.

To a real dyed-in-the-wool beagle man, the Old Dominion offers no finer fun than a good old fashioned rabbit hunt. By an old fashioned rabbit hunt, I mean one where both the hounds and the rabbits are numerous and where both are eager and ready for the chase. Don't give me one of these "one hound and one rabbit" hunts, or even worse a "no hound-jump 'em up yourself" hunt! That's not the old time style! For a genuine old fashioned rabbit hunt you must have a pack of hounds with caroling voices and eager noses and a love of the chase for the chase's sake. Lucky are the men who can muster such a pack, and on a certain rainy morning not too long ago, by combining our respective dogs, Syd Mitchell, Jerry Shreve, and I could be counted among the lucky ones.

We loaded our fifteen wriggling, eager, little hounds into the trailer and a short time later picked up Howard Nuckols, another rabbit and hound enthusiast of the old school. From there on the "no stop" sign was hoisted and we rolled rubber for Cumber-

land County. The rain gave up the fight just as we reached the county line and soon, after no little slipping and sliding over some slick country roads, we skidded to a stop in front of the farmer's house on whose land we were to hunt. It was music to our ears to hear him say that "cottontails were right plentiful" on his place. We assured him that he'd have rabbit for supper that night.

At that point it would have been difficult to say whether or not the enthusiasm of the tumbling mass of rabbit dogs in the trailer matched our own eagerness to get started. Howard flung open the trailer door and selected seven of the little fellows for the morning's chase. Out scrambled Winnie, veteran of many happy hunts, with Little Joe, Toney, Danny, Beauty, Eight-Bawl, and Rant right on her heels. While Sid, Howard, and I hastily assembled our guns, Jerry, true to form, pulled out his lunch and ate about half of it.

About this time the dogs in the trailer set up a terrific racket about being left behind. We immediately held a conference and decided to let them join the hunt right from the beginning. In a few minutes Trumpet, Rocket, Dale, Tonnette, Billie-Boy, Belle, Sco, and Nellie were streaking out after the others.

The pack spread out over the partially frozen fields and converged upon a big briar patch behind an old barn. Little Joe dove into the brambles with all the eagerness of a youngster. Winnie, the oldest of the

Photos by Shomon

**We start the hunting by selecting seven good beagles for the morning's chase.**



**While the dogs work the briars we give assistance by working over the honeysuckle.**





pack, slipped into the left of Joe and immediately began stepping around as if she were going into a dance. Her tail wiggled fast and furiously; it seemed that a cottontail was right under her nose. We watched without getting unduly excited as we knew she could smell a rabbit's track two hours old.

The rest of the pack was still a little wild, and had not settled down to business, but they all changed ends in a hurry when a ball of fur exploded in front of Winnie and Joe. With that, the chase was on. Winnie took the lead, her mournful old voice mellowed with age sounding like the approach of doom. Little Joe was close behind with his short chopping voice cutting staccato patterns in the echoes. In came the rest: Trumpet with his squall; Sco, Dannie, and Rocket bawling; Toney and his deep bugle, with Billie-Boy, Rant, and the others joining in the chorus. This was what we had planned for, hoped for, and what we had driven 70 miles to hear—just to let 'em run and sing. At that moment no symphony on earth could have produced notes more pleasing to our ears.

The little "musicians" took the quarry almost out of hearing, then as always they started back. On the far side of the field in which we had taken our stands a dense thicket on the edge of a little stream offered the cottontail temporary refuge. For several minutes all was quiet. Syd started across the field towards them but stopped short when Rocket let out a bawl, signalling the others that he had picked up the track. Things really got hot then. Out of the thicket burst the entire pack and headed for us in full cry. We hurriedly grabbed high spots from which to watch for telltale movements ahead of the dogs.

The hounds were almost to us and I had begun to think the wily bunny had given us the slip. Then a movement in the weeds caught my eye. I whirled just in time to see Howard calmly raise his long single barreled scattergun. Wham! and knowing who shot,

no one yelled "did you get him?" It is indeed an event when that boy fails to connect. Howard picked up his kill and showed it to each beagle as he came in. We all gathered around patting the dogs and excitedly talking about the fine 45-minute chase.

The ground was beginning to soften, making better scenting conditions for the beagles. We moved on and it wasn't long before Howard, with the sharp eyes of an old country boy, spotted a big one in its bed. He tried to show the half-hidden rabbit to me but I couldn't see it. After finally deciding I was going blind, he moved in with sufficient noise to get the bunny up. It bounded away and we yelled for the dogs: Heah! Heah! Heah! Heah! The chase was on again. After a good run, this one joined the first in the game bag.

By noon we had hunted most of the high grounds and were back at the car with four rabbits and ravenous appetites. The morning's hunt was rehashed as we ate. In between sandwiches and swigs of hot coffee, each of the rabbits was jumped, chased, and shot all over again. The hounds sat around in expectant attitudes, heads cocked and tails wagging, knowing that every now and then a tasty bit of sandwich would be coming their way.

The afternoon's hunt took us into the low grounds with its swamps and boggy slash-thickets. In this kind of territory a rabbit has every chance of eluding the dogs, and each time one is jumped you can bet your boots you'll have a "run for your money."

By late afternoon we had four more rabbits. The sun was dropping fast and Syd had just suggested that we take the dogs up when Eight-Bawl came ambling by. We watched him stick his head in a pile of slash and "swish" old Mollie burst from under his very nose. When the startled dog had recovered from his surprise he let out a bawl that brought the rest of the pack tearing to the scene.

**Our first bunny is finally bagged after a prolonged and exciting chase. And the dogs get rewarded with a smell.**



**Four rabbits wasn't bad for the afternoon. Plenty got away and we're glad of it.**





It was the biggest rat race I've ever seen. For fully 15 minutes that smart old rabbit scampered from one lap to the other. Finally, the tumult was too much for her and she broke for open country. After leading the pack through fields and thick woods she showed up just out of shotgun range. Upon seeing us she laid her ears back and really turned on the steam. About then the whole pack spotted her and every dog opened up. Along the crest of a low ridge near the woods she streaked with the hounds strung out behind for two hundred yards.

It was a scene I'll long remember. As Syd expressed it, "The music was dripping from the leaves." Someone else yelled, "they're really readin' it to her out

of the book." That certainly was a smart rabbit and we were really glad when she took refuge under an old stump and gave us an excuse to call it a day. Anyway, we had eight in the bag and the dogs were as tired as we were. Two rabbits for the landowner left six for our own supper, and that was plenty for four men who enjoy the chase more than the kill.

As we ambled back to the car, I turned and watched the purple shadows creeping over the land as the sun dropped further below the horizon. I drew a long breath of satisfaction. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, that could beat an old fashioned rabbit hunt!

## BOBWHITES ON THE RISE

(Continued from page 9)

Bicolor makes excellent use of wildlife land; it provides food abundance when planted in correct land-use patterns.

Bicolor may be grown in woods, on borders, across broomsedge fields, or near vegetated stream banks without more cover than it provides itself. We may find it necessary to add some cover to bicolor hedges across fields in cultivation. If bicolor is ever grown in pastures, it will probably be between two living fences of multiflora rose . . .

For Virginia, earlier ripening lespedezas are already discovered—will be produced in 1950 and thereafter in increasing quantities. These improved strains will be scarce for 2 or 3 years.

Bicolor food strips deserve very wide application in openings of southern pineland and blackjack. They will attract the coveys as soon as the seed is produced. The number of strips to grow on each 100 acres has not yet been determined, but is important. One strip for each 20 or 25 acres is conservative. Perhaps one for each 10-acre tract is none too many. We need not think of more than this until further results are measured in terms of quail per strip. Four or five bicolor strips per 100 acres of woods will feed four or five coveys well. Openings large enough for a food strip are common in much of the woodland in the south . . .

Field borders along woodlands, streams, and gullies, are excellent places to locate food for bobwhites. Cover is already provided in the shrubs and grass of the adjoining land.

Remember the proposition that we must outdo our earlier concept of conservation, limited to "saving." We must *produce* more game if we want good hunting.

If the sport of quail hunting is worth only a dollar

and a quarter license annually, you have probably hunted much more in the past than you will in the future. If it is worth two or three dollars a covey, you can afford to keep your gun and considerable hope. For those who can afford a hundred dollars or more a year—and a lot of people can—intensive land management holds lots of promise.

You might think offhand that too much prominence has been given to bicolor lespedeza and multiflora rose as food and cover, to be planted on wildlife land for bobwhites. Their significance is hard to exaggerate. They are more dependable than any other plants in the range to which they are adapted. Bicolor gave us positive proof of natural food deficiencies. It taught us new, simpler, and more successful principles of bobwhite management. The value of any other food plant can be measured best by comparing its characteristics with bicolor lespedeza. Bobwhites, themselves, and hundreds of landowners supplied the evidence for the above conclusions. Bicolor is worthy of a trial wherever quail exist. I am sure it will require a drought resistant strain for the west, an early ripening strain for the north. If these cannot be developed, bobwhite management will remain unsatisfied until someone discovers something else of equal character.

One added thought: you must encourage landowners to produce quail for themselves—or the friends they wish to entertain. Virginia took a commendable step of encouragement when they passed the 1946 law making hunting licenses void until the hunter has full permission from the landowner to enter his property.

It must be self-evident why I dedicated Bobwhites on the Rise not only "to those who hunt the bobwhite quail"; but also "to the landowners, who alone can grow more of them."

(This article is taken from Mr. Davison's recent book *Bobwhites on the Rise* published by Charles Scribner's Sons. Permission of Scribner's.)



## TRAILBLAZERS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

(Continued from page 12)

"Both parties left Virginia for their homes in the south and west, leaving Butler and Carr in possession of the Elk lick, which was the cause of dispute. My informant had this account from Carr, an eyewitness. The battle ground, breastwork, and great grave are yet to be seen." In front of the site of old Fort Witten and in sight of Battle Knob, where this Indian battle took place, is a cave partly filled with Indian skeletons, thought by some to have been associated with this or some similar Indian conflict. It was the author's privilege two years ago to descend into this charnel house some forty feet on a rope and examine the contents.

Even after the 1860's southwest Virginia, especially south of Abingdon toward Whitetop and northeast

toward Burkes Garden, was still famous for its deer and bear. As civilization gradually took hold, the exploits of these hardy pioneers faded into history. Today, cities have risen where once there were primeval forests, but wildlife, although fewer in numbers and minus some species, still roams the mountains of the Commonwealth.

Present day hunters, like their ancestors, possess that innate desire for the hunt. It is a calling which now stems from a love of the sport and is not a matter of obtaining food for survival. The sportsmen of today have reason to feel a sense of pride when they talk and think about their long hunter predecessors. In view of the importance of the early hunter's calling in southwest Virginia, as well as the delight he took in his profession for diversion, it is hoped that due honor will be given these early trail blazers of our now thickly settled and prosperous country.



## Look Out Your Window

By FLORENCE S. McDANIEL

THE ICE-LADEN GRASSES and twigs glimmer and sparkle in the early morning. The world is crystal-coated and picturesque but its beauty is cold and barren; the birds have disappeared, the world is still.

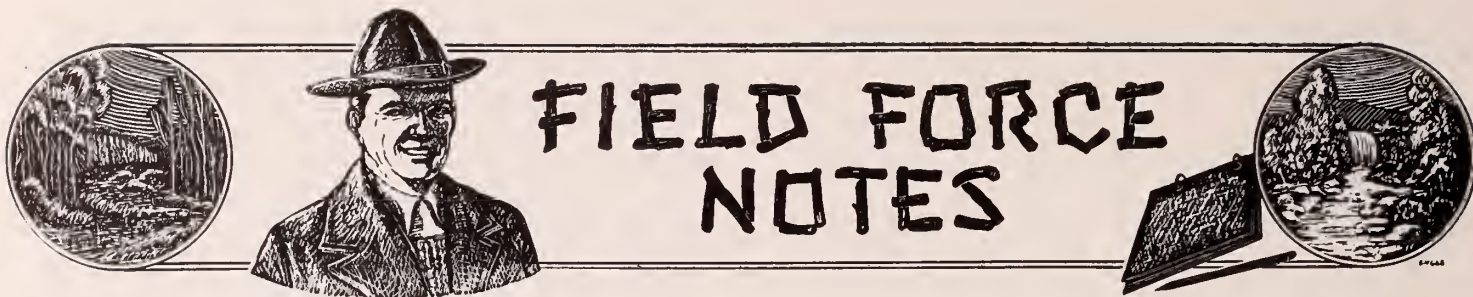
A handful of crumbs scattered from a door awakens the world as small feathered life, seemingly from nowhere, arrive at the scene. The snow birds (Carolina junco) are the first to come and are by far the most numerous of the breakfast guests. A few field sparrows dart in followed by a flash of red from the old cedar as the crested cardinal makes his appearance. The song sparrows, which spent the summer by the creek, soon join a northern robin who thought he was far enough south and looks quite forlorn as he steps daintily on the icy crust. The Carolina wren from his home under the eaves pecks quickly at the crumbs, his tail as perky as ever. The mockingbird protests as the greedy sparrows start cleaning up, but scatters with the rest when a saucy jay flies down to take over. Hunger emboldens a few; they venture from the protective hedges only to scatter and fly up again as the jay advances. Food scattered from another window lures the jay from the scene and the first guests return for the gleanings.

Filling my pockets with small grain I head for the mail box by the road. The covey of quail in the honeysuckle must be fed, too. Not a track nor a sign gives them away, but the grain will be gone before I return. They have eluded the hunters, stray cats, and dogs, but need help from the weather. I would not miss their cheery "*Bob White, Bob White*" come spring, so daily during each storm I scatter grain where they can reach it without venturing too far from their protective cover.

With seed catalogs from the mail box tucked under my arm, I plan my garden as I return. Another dogwood, its berries for the robins that might winter; poke bushes should be left behind the garage for the cardinals. That old cedar I had planned to cut will be left, and a new holly tree planted to entice the mockingbird to stay. The Carolina wrens need nothing except crumbs in bad weather, for wasps are plentiful, and I can count on their "*Cheerily, Cheerily*" call throughout the year.

My winged friends are still feeding when I reach the door, bits of feathered color against the whiteness of the snow. I go inside with a warm feeling; it's winter, but spring is waiting in my yard.





### **State Forest Service Erects New Fire Prevention Signs**

The Virginia Forest Service has just received new 26x30 inch steel signs which are being erected along the highways of the State. These signs carry various forest fire prevention messages lettered in green on a white background and are erected on creosoted posts on the highway right-of-ways.

George W. Dean, Virginia state forester, states that the signs are an effort toward combatting the largest single cause of fires in the state—those started by careless people. He feels that a reminder at the right time to use the automobile ash tray or to drown a camp-fire will serve to prevent many destructive fires.



Virginia State Forest Service

One of the new conservation signs recently installed along the highways of the State.

### **Fish Dynamiters Get Stiff Fines**

Word comes from Hunter Perry, Game Warden of Russell County, telling of an interesting experience he had with a group of fish dynamiters last November.

Warden Perry relates that he got a frantic telephone call from an anonymous party to go to Little River, that apparently someone there was dynamiting fish. Perry rushed to the scene and when he arrived found a man and his wife, who said they were afraid the report was false, and that the blasting may have been done by a road crew.

Perry, however, decided to go down to the river and investigate, and was followed by the man and his wife. As they went down the road a pickup truck approached, with four occupants, and as it passed one of the men in the truck yelled an insulting remark to the farmer's wife, whereupon the farmer urged Perry to pursue the vehicle.

Warden Perry followed the pickup truck until it was forced to slow down at a gate, whereupon one of the occupants threw out some dynamite and a bunch of fish.

All four of the occupants were arrested on a fish-dynamiting charge and were taken to court. The four men, all from Sword Creek, were Carl Taylor, Tom Taylor, Andrew Jackson and a chap by the name of Mays. Mays was fined \$150 after admitting to having furnished the dynamite, and Carl Taylor was fined \$150 for participating in the act and for the insulting remark made to the woman. Andrew Jackson and Tom Taylor were fined \$100 each. Thus the four dynamiters were given penalties totaling \$500, and a stern warning by Trial Justice J. E. Duff of Lebanon that their future conduct would be watched.

### **Wolf Killed Near Staunton**

According to a recent article in the *Waynesboro News-Virginian*, the first wolf seen in that area for the past 12 years was recently killed in Augusta County.

Mr. Clarence M. Eddy of Route 2, Staunton, noticed a disturbance one morning about 7 a.m. in his flock of sheep. They were running here and there in mad



panie. Mr. Eddy grabbed his shotgun and rifle and gave chase. He spotted the wolf but before it could be killed, 11 sheep had been destroyed.

The animal was reported to have weighed 30 pounds, and had hair the color of broom sedge. Its head was flat and its molars were so broad they appeared like two sets of teeth.

Houston Todd, game warden for Augusta County, stated that residents of the area are wondering why the wolf appeared in that section, since the few remaining animals of that species mainly confined their activities to the densely wooded mountains. Warden Todd sat up for several nights listening for the howling of the wolf's mate, but from all indications the animal was alone.

### ***So You're Getting Too Old to Hunt?***

Those nimrods of the Commonwealth who think they have seen a few too many hunting seasons go by to still enjoy a good hunt should take notice of the following account.

Mr. B. F. Ritenour of Strasburg is referred to in local hunting circles of that area as being a big game hunter from way back. Three years ago he killed his first deer; at that time he was a youngster of 81. Recently he was stopped by one of the local game wardens who checked his license. Mr. Ritenour, now in his prime, was carrying a 30-30 rifle in one hand and a cane in the other. Some of the younger "sportsmen" have found a 30-30 pretty rough to handle, but not Mr. Ritenour. Even at his age he has no trouble with the stiff recoil.

### ***Hunter Turns Out to be Good Game Warden***

Peter J. Hanlan, staff assistant on the George Washington National Forest, was recently in the Game Commission's offices and told us an unusual story.

It happened during the open deer season on the Forest in Augusta County. A deer hunter was hunting deer just outside the Big Levels Refuge when he witnessed another hunter deliberately shoot and kill a deer in the Refuge. When he saw the violator try to get away with the deer it was too much for the law abiding observer. He immediately contacted his hunting companion and asked him to go and get the game warden. He then overtook the violator and told him that he was holding him until the warden got there.

The warden was not long in arriving on the scene and promptly apprehended the slayer of the deer. The violator will be tried before the U. S. Commissioner in Staunton.

At the beginning of this note a statement was made to the effect that the incident was unusual. Although

it is unusual for a hunter to apprehend a fellow hunter, it should by no means be uncommon. It is the responsibility of every true sportsman in Virginia to help protect the game and fish from those who would take our wildlife resources in an unlawful manner.

### ***Another Albino Squirrel Bagged***

Mr. William B. Sheldon of Newport News recently reported that he killed a solid white albino squirrel in Charles City County. This is the third instance in the last few months of an albino being bagged by hunters.

According to Mr. Sheldon he was participating in a regular deer hunt when he noticed the squirrel. He made a mental note of the squirrel's location and after the hunt came back to look for it. The albino was re-located in a tall pine and was traveling with several other squirrels, all of which were of the gray variety. After killing the squirrel Mr. Sheldon noticed that it was a good specimen and had all the characteristics of a true albino.



Photo by Nixon

**W. B. Sheldon of Newport News holds the albino squirrel he bagged while on a deer hunt.**



## THE BUSINESS VALUE OF WILDLIFE

(Continued from page 19)

values which cannot be computed, such as the increased value of property because of the existence of wildlife. A farm is more valuable if it has game on it and a city is more desirable in which to live if hunting and fishing are accessible. These recreations have a very definite effect upon real estate values in whole sections of the state. The valuable lands in northern Virginia are highly priced because fox hunting is popular, and the great hunting horse industry has been built around this sport. There are many marsh areas which cannot be bought for \$100 an acre today—areas which wouldn't bring \$1 an acre if it were not for the waterfowl and muskrats. Much upland farm land is acquired by sportsmen at big prices, and only for the reason that the hunting is good.

Many of the homes in cities and towns, as well as homes on the farms, bring better prices on the real estate market because hunting and fishing facilities are available. These added values are intangible, but the thoughtful citizen will realize that they are present.

Another economic factor which certainly should not be overlooked in any evaluation of the importance of Virginia's wildlife is the established fact that many estimable Virginia citizens would unquestionably have moved out of the state had it not been for the hunting and fishing which they enjoy in Virginia. Repeated cases can be cited in which Virginians have been

offered far greater financial compensation elsewhere, but have declined even the most flattering offers because they placed greater value on their hunting and fishing here. They preferred to remain in Virginia rather than go elsewhere to localities which would deny them their favorite recreations. A high-type citizen is regarded as among a state's most valuable assets.

Neither Ohio nor any other state can make any sort of estimate of the importance of hunting and fishing in terms of healthier and better citizens, nor can anyone form any idea of the value of these wholesome outdoor sports in their impact upon the moral and spiritual well-being of the future generations in an era when national and state governments are concerned over the question of how increasing leisure is to be spent.

But sticking to the purely economic facts which have been ascertained in the Ohio study it is evident that hunting and fishing, and the wildlife and game fish upon which these recreations depend, are of tremendous importance to all people. This fact has also been well established in West Virginia where recent large appropriations from tax revenues have been made to help the sportsmen's dollars in perpetuating these sports.

One may form a rough estimate for himself from the findings in Ohio's recent survey as to how much money is being spent by the hunters and anglers in Virginia. The figures are astronomical.

## ELEVEN YEARS OF WILDLIFE RESTORATION

(Continued from page 7)

They prey primarily on the buck-toothed competitors for turkey foods. Like the doctor prescribing for humans, wildlife technicians must study their patients, then recommend whatever treatment their particular ailments call for.

Space does not permit recounting Pittman-Robertson actions by the States for farmland wildlife and migratory waterfowl. The former have top rank in the annual harvest—the latter are sought after by one-fifth of the ten million hunting license buyers. Both have received major restoration attention.

During the first 11 years of Pittman-Robertson operations the Congress appropriated \$34,707,960.88 to carry on wildlife restoration. Virginia's share of this amounted to \$548,429.24. With the State's required 25 percent contribution to project costs added, the total available for the work was \$731,238.99. The wise investment of this income has brought lush dividends to the gunners who have chipped in to make the work possible. The far-sighted authors and sponsors of the Pittman-Robertson Act can well be proud of the many outstanding accomplishments that have come from its many actions.

## THE MOUNTAIN "BOOMER"

(Continued from page 17)

is a hard working little fellow in his own right. He stockpiles seeds and cones and his "middens" or cone heaps are fairly common on the forest floor. A squirrel may have several of these middens in his area, each containing from three to ten bushels of cones. No attempt is made to hide these piles, but secret caches of seeds and nuts are placed here and there throughout the territory, apparently as an emergency ration procedure. It's just as well that he does so, because in addition to all his other worries the neighbors are thieves. Seed eating birds, other squirrels, forest mice, and even bears, raid his stores.

With all his troubles however, the red squirrel manages to hold his own, and he is found today from Virginia into Canada and west to southern Minnesota. He is also established in New Mexico and Arizona and in the northern part of lower California. Though he may not be called the mountain boomer outside of his Blue Ridge range, it's a safe bet that wherever he lives he's got a nickname that's based on his rattling call, and he's busy observing and announcing all the news of the forest to any and all who care to listen.





Hunt begins atop Bromley Mountain, Russell County. Left to right: B. Bird, C. Pryer, H. Perry, Commissioner Stras, and W. Kesterson.



Looking west toward Whitetop Mountain from Mount Rogers. Two days were spent here in Washington County shooting movie sequences of grouse hunting.

## *Virginia Grouse Hunt*

Hunting the elusive ruffed grouse at elevations better than 4,000 feet in Virginia's southwestern mountains is rugged sport, to say the least. To follow the ridges and coves with a camera — both still and movie — and expect film results, well . . . that's even a greater task. These few still pictures were taken concurrently while Carl Pryer, Commission's movie director, ground away at a short movie sequence.



"Gal" holds her point while Hunter Perry cautiously advances for the flush. Grouse are shy, flush easily.

Photos by J. J. Shomon and C. Pryer



A ruffed grouse folds up in the air at 35 yards. Misses are plenty.



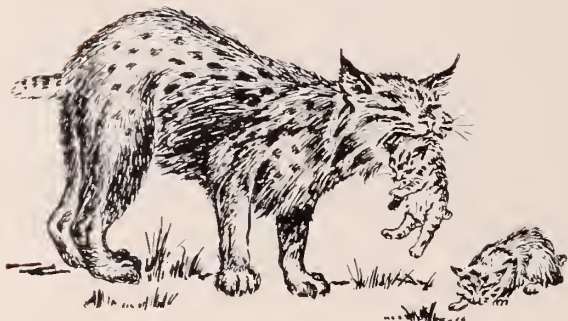
Wheeler M. Kesterson, new law enforcement chief, is happy over his "red-tails."



Day ends in Bland County. Admiring grouse are, l. to r., M. W. Kesterson, Ben Bird, Hunter Perry.



WILDCATS MAKE THEIR  
HOMES IN LOGS, HOLLOW  
TREES OR ROCK CREVICES



THOUGH AN EXPERT AT  
CLIMBING--HE DOES MUCH  
HUNTING ON THE GROUND

BOBCATS EXCEL AT MOUSING  
BUT ARE ESPECIALLY FOND  
OF RABBIT AND SQUIRREL



# BOBCAT

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BOBCATS EAT LESS GAME  
THAN THE GREAT HOST OF  
SEMI-WILD HOUSE CATS



AVERAGE MALES WEIGH  
FROM 20 TO 25 POUNDS--  
FEMALES ARE SMALLER